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# **u.s. coast guard news**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Local Coast Guard Marine Safety Office cites positive environmental trends**

SAN DIEGO -- Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Diego's stewardship of the marine environment shows positive results in review of 2000 data.

On the eve of Earth Day, the Coast Guard has noted significant success in its mission to protect the marine environment and prevent oil spills. In an area of responsibility that includes some 70 Navy ships, 27 bulk oil facilities, 42 marinas and fuel docks, and 700 square miles of inland navigable water, the Coast Guard reports only 256 oil spills in the year 2000, compared to 293 in 1999 and 385 in 1998. Most of these spills were less than one gallon. Marina spills were down 5% from 1999, and down 60% from 1998.

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Most significantly the Coast Guard has gotten much better at holding spillers responsible. The volume attributable to "mystery spills", those with no known source, has dramatically decreased, from over 2400 gallons in 1997 to only 84 gallons in 2000. The Coast Guard attributes this to far better community awareness and spill reporting.

To report an oil spill call 800-424-8802.

Another pollution concern is sewage from boats. Within 3 miles from shore, it is illegal to discharge a vessel's holding tank untreated. Within San Diego Bay, even treated discharges are prohibited.

The Coast Guard has made specific efforts to educate marinas and boaters on the locations and use of the 13 sewage pump-out facilities available to San Diego's boaters...and they seem to be listening. Use of pump-out facilities is up some 50%. A list of these facility locations is available at the website [www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/msosd.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/msosd.htm).

Marine Safety Office San Diego is also getting the word out on marine pollution through the Coast Guard's "Sea Partners" Campaign. The goal of this campaign is to increase compliance with marine pollution laws and regulations through education, thus decreasing the pollutants in the ocean.

Locally, the program reached nearly 14 thousand people in the last 12 months.

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These presentations are free of charge and are designed to reach all age groups. Speakers are available to address groups from school children to civil organizations. To find out more about this program or to schedule a presentation, call 619-683-6490.

The Sea Partners program will participate at the "Day at the Docks" event on April 28<sup>th</sup>. This annual event will take place at San Diego's Sportfishing Docks in Point Loma. The Marine Safety Office will have three booths addressing environmental protection, boating safety and more.

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**MEDIA ADVISORY:** The full data is available online in our 2000 Business Plan at our unit web site <http://www.uscg.mil/d11/sandiego/msosd.htm>.